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INFO RUCNCAN/ALL CANADIAN POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 1944

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 000194

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/11/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [KJUS](#) [KCOR](#) [SNAR](#) [MX](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR MEXICAN POLICE AND JUDICIAL

REFORM

REF: OTTAWA 134

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: An inter-agency Canadian team will meet with counterparts in Mexico City on March 12 and 13 to see how Canada might better support President Calderon's efforts to reform the police, corrections, and judicial sectors. The mission, which National Security Advisor Marie-Lucie Morin initiated, is the culmination of reinvigorated bilateral security policy consultations that began in December 2007. New funding may be a problem in this economic environment, but Canada believes it could bring substantial value-added support for Mexican crime prevention efforts, including drug courts and other early intervention programs. The Canadian officials will call on Embassy Mexico City counterparts responsible for the Merida Initiative, with an eye toward supplementing U.S. efforts and avoiding overlap. Canada currently channels its counter-narcotics and anti-crime funding through the OAS and UNODC. End Summary.

¶2. (C) AREAS OF POTENTIAL COLLABORATION: The Department of Public Safety's Director General for International Affairs Artur Wilczynski will lead a Canadian inter-agency delegation to Mexico City for talks on March 12 and 13 to discuss how Canada might better contribute to President Calderon's efforts to combat crime in Mexico. The Canadians will focus on police, corrections, and judicial reform, as well as crime prevention programs, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's (DFAIT) International Crime and Drugs Deputy Director Ursula Holland. She commented that police reform was an "enormous issue" and "clearly beyond Canada's capacity" to address alone, but noted that, with so many large needs in reforming and professionalizing the police, any help from Canada could be important. Holland added that Canada's limited resources will likely make close cooperation with the USG's Merida Initiative essential. Mexican officials have expressed an interest in hearing about Canadian capabilities to assist in corrections reform, according to Holland, notably training corrections officers and improving prison conditions. Judicial reform, as Mexico transitions to an adversarial court system, was a challenge that is "generational in scope," Holland observed. She said that Canada would likely turn to Canada's National Judicial Institute, an NGO that plays an important role across the country in training judges. Canada also believes that it could offer significant help in designing crime prevention programs, such as drug courts for non-violent offenders, community and social service intervention programs to prevent young offenders from turning into hardened criminals, and alternative dispute resolution forums. The goal in such programs, Holland noted, was to reduce stress on Mexico's justice system by "heading off problems before they become problems."

¶3. (C) VISITS DRIVING PROCESS: Travel by senior officials helped to drive an accelerated tempo of engagement, according to Holland. Assistant Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for

North America Elaine Feldman visited Mexico City in early December 2008 to gauge Mexican priorities in the criminal justice area. DFAIT Deputy Director for Mexico David Morgan said that new National Security Advisor Marie-Lucie Morin's strong personal interest in Mexico also pushed the Canadian inter-agency process. To underscore the emphasis she places on North America, Morin chose for symbolic reasons to make Qon North America, Morin chose for symbolic reasons to make her second foreign trip as NSA to Mexico on January 11 and 12 (her first trip was to Washington), according to Morgan. He added that Morin came back from her visit with a "very positive sense of the Mexican administration" and that she described the Calderon government as a "serious" one that is "doing all the right things" and deserved more Canadian support. Morgan and Holland added that the upcoming inter-agency visit builds on reinvigorated security policy discussions that began in December 2007 in Mexico City. The Canadians hosted Mexican counterparts on February 26 for talks that Holland said were notable for the "ramping up of interest on the part of the Mexican side."

14. (C) MEXICO MEETING AGENDA: The Canadian delegation has requested meetings with the Presidencia, the National Security Council, the Attorney General's Office, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Justice, and Foreign Ministry. The delegation also hopes to meet with Pro Derecho, the USAID-funded judicial reform NGO, as well as the U.S., French, and UK Embassies.

15. (C) NEXT STEPS CLOUDY: Upon return, the Canadian officials will regroup internally to "find Canada's niche." According to Morgan, DFAIT has promised NSA Morin and ADM Feldman a trip report and recommendations for further action by the first week of April. Funding may pose a problem, however,

OTTAWA 00000194 002 OF 002

DFAIT has special funding for "fragile or failing states," but Canada's unwillingness to designate Mexico publicly as a "fragile or failed" state likely precludes tapping this stream of money. Holland noted that Mexico's comparatively high level of economic development also makes it an awkward fit for Canadian International Development Agency funds. (Note: Mexico is not on CIDA's new list of 20 top priority aid recipients -- see reftel. end note) "It's a complex challenge," she said, "because Mexico is a sophisticated partner, not an aid recipient." Morgan added that Canadian officials had been careful to dampen Mexican expectations for significant programmatic support. He stressed that NSA Morin had specifically tasked the group with examining how best to support Mexico in light of Canada's human resource and financial capital constraints. Without a compelling case for Cabinet, new funding for Mexico would likely mean "cannibalizing" the aid budget from other countries. Under a best case scenario, DFAIT might ask Cabinet for a maximum of C\$15 million in new money, while a worst case would mean no new money and simply "shuffling the deck chairs around."

16. (C) AID IS MOSTLY MULTILATERAL: New bilateral assistance would break Canada's current practice of funding for Mexico mostly through international organizations and NGOs. According to Morgan, Canada currently gives about C\$10 million for Mexico, including C\$1 million through the OAS to combat synthetic drugs and C\$1.1 million through the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to combat human trafficking and organized crime. Canada has no current bilateral security assistance programs for Mexico, apart from the bilateral policy discussion as well as smaller, more informal information exchanges involving the RCMP and Immigration Canada and their Mexican counterparts.

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